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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 6, 2004**

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### **NAVAJO MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR DOUBLE HOMICIDE**

**PHOENIX, ARIZONA** –The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on January 6, 2004, Jayson Nez, DOB:11/09/1980, of the Navajo Reservation, Arizona, was sentenced to life imprisonment by United States District Judge Paul G. Rosenblatt, in Phoenix, Arizona.

On or about January 23, 2003, Jayson Nez and Willie Lee Lewis went to the home of Steven Tom and Gene Tom to rob them. When they arrived at the house, they found Gene Tom working on his car in front of the house. They beat him to death with rocks they placed in socks. Then Lewis went into the house and waited for Steven Tom to return. Nez hid behind the back door of the house and Lewis crouched by a stove with a shotgun pointed at the back door. When Steven Tom opened the back door to his house, he was shot in the face by Lewis. Seeing Steven still breathing, Nez grabbed a knife and stabbed Steven three times in the neck. Nez and Lewis then proceeded to clean up the blood and steal a truck, two guns, and other items. They took the bodies of Gene and Steven Tom and buried them in a wash one to two miles away. They then traveled in Steven's truck to Phoenix. The Tom's bodies were discovered on March 8, 2003.

(MORE)

Willie Lee Lewis pleaded guilty on October 3, 2003, to two counts of second degree murder and one count of discharge of a firearm during a crime of violence. Under the terms of his plea agreement, Lewis faces a sentence of 32-42 years imprisonment.

Jayson Nez was found guilty by jury on October 10, 2003 of two counts of First Degree Murder, two counts of Felony Murder, one count of Robbery and one count of Discharge of a firearm during a crime of violence.

At sentencing, the court remarked about the brutality of the crime and the fact that the defendant had hidden all evidence, including the bodies, causing the victims' family needless worry until the bodies were found six weeks later. The court further stated that, although Nez did not have any violent criminal history, the facts of these murders warranted the mandatory sentence of life imprisonment, which the court then imposed.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Navajo Department of Public Safety, Criminal Investigations Division

The prosecution was handled by Ann Birmingham Scheel, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-361-PCT-PGR  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2004-002

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